

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.277
28 July 1966
ENGLISH

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 28 July 1966, at 10.30.a.m.

THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

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DOCUMENT
COLLECTION

Chairman:

Mr. Z. CERNIK (Czechoslovakia)

PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. A.F. AZEREDO da SILVEIRA
Mr. G. de CARVALHO SILOS
Mr. A. da COSTA GUIMARAES
Mr. C.H. PAULINO PRATES

Bulgaria:

Mr. C. LUKANOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. D. POPOV
Mr. T. DAMIANOV

Burma:

U MAUNG MAUNG
U MAUNG MAUNG GYI

Canada:

Mr. E.L.M. BURNS
Mr. C.J. MARSHALL
Mr. P.D. LEE

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. Z. CERNIK
Mr. V. VAJNAR
Mr. R. KLEIN

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ABERA
Mr. A. ZELLEKE
Mr. B. ASSFAW

India:

Mr. V.C. TRIVEDI
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. F. CAVALLETTI
Mr. G.P. TOZZOLI
Mr. S. AVETTA
Mr. F. SORO

Mexico:

Mr. A. GOMEZ ROBLEDO
Mr. M. TELLO MACIAS

Nigeria:

Mr. G.O. IJEWERE
Mr. M.B. BRIMAH

Poland:

Mr. M. BLUSZTAJN
Mr. E. STANIEWSKI
Mr. B. KAJDY

PRESENT AT THE TABLE (cont'd)

Romania:

Mr. V. DUMITRESCU
Mr. N. ECOBESCU
Mr. E. GLASER
Mr. C. UNGUREANU

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL
Mr. P. HAMMARSKJOLD
Mr. R. BOMAN
Mr. J. PRAWITZ

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A. A. ROSHCHIN
Mr. I. I. CHEPROV
Mr. M. P. SHELEPIN
Mr. V. B. TOULINOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF
Mr. A. OSMAN
Mr. A. A. SALAM

United Kingdom:

Lord CHALFONT
Sir Harold BEELEY
Mr. J. G. TAHOUDIN
Miss E.J.M. RICHARDSON

United States of America:

Mr. A.S. FISHER
Mr. L. WEILER
Mr. C.G. BREAM
Mr. A. NEIDLE

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General:

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Special Representative
of the Secretary-General:

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

The CHAIRMAN (Czechoslovakia) (translation from Russian): I declare open the 277th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.

As has been agreed (ENDC/PV.272, p.36), we shall begin today the examination of partial collateral measures, to which the next four meetings will be devoted. However, in accordance with the practice of the Committee, representatives are at liberty to speak also on other aspects of disarmament.

Mr. FISHER (United States of America): For the past few meetings we have been discussing a non-proliferation agreement. While, according to the order of work adopted at our 272nd meeting, the present meeting is to be devoted to the discussion of other collateral measures, I should like to continue briefly to discuss one aspect of non-proliferation and to talk today about the subject of safeguards over nuclear materials and the important role they play in preventing proliferation. I should like to do so because of the importance my Government attaches to securing the widest application of a workable system of safeguards over peaceful nuclear activities, both through a non-proliferation treaty and through efforts outside it.

The position of the United States was stated clearly by President Johnson in his message to this Conference on 27 January, when he said:

"...through a non-proliferation treaty and through efforts outside such a treaty, we must continue to secure application of International Atomic Energy Agency or equivalent international safeguards over peaceful nuclear activities." (ENDC/165, p.2)

I should like at this time to indicate what actions the United States believes must be taken in order to establish a system of international safeguards which will be truly effective in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Such a system will of course involve an undertaking by all to co-operate actively in facilitating the application of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards or equivalent international safeguards to all peaceful nuclear activities.

To be somewhat more specific, such a system will involve an undertaking by the non-nuclear-weapon States to accept IAEA safeguards or equivalent international safeguards on all their peaceful activities. It will also involve an undertaking by all States not to provide source or fissionable material, or specialized equipment or

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

non-nuclear material for processing or use of source or fissionable material or for the production of fissionable material, to any other State for peaceful purposes unless such material and equipment are subject to IAEA or equivalent international safeguards. That obligation should apply to the peaceful programmes of all States, whether they be nuclear-weapon States or non-nuclear-weapon States.

In arriving at a decision to recommend such a system of safeguards -- one which is not only effective but workable -- the United States examined a variety of possibilities. The first and perhaps the most obvious was a safeguard system which would apply to all peaceful activities of all States, those with weapon programmes as well as those without. That would have the virtue of an apparent balance; the system would apply to all States alike.

But the application of a system of safeguards to all the peaceful activities of existing nuclear-weapon Powers would involve a tremendous strain on the safeguard system. A strict inspection of the peaceful nuclear activities of existing nuclear-weapon Powers when there is no restriction on their increasing their large nuclear stockpiles might well be described as straining at gnats while swallowing camels. It flies in the face of logic to argue that such a solution is essential to the objectives of non-proliferation. That type of inspection would become relevant when we have followed a non-proliferation treaty with other measures which would prevent the nuclear-weapon Powers from increasing their stockpiles.

Another possibility was to apply safeguards to the peaceful activities of the non-nuclear-weapon Powers alone. While that might appear to follow logically from a rejection of the first alternative which I have described, it would contain certain elements of partiality to which the non-nuclear-weapon Powers have objected.

We may well differ with the evaluation of the burdens of international safeguards that underlies that objection. Two nuclear-weapon States, the United States and the United Kingdom, and many other States do not believe those international safeguards to be burdensome, and they have backed that conviction with action. They have submitted portions of their own peaceful programmes to international safeguards and have found these quite workable. Yet one cannot avoid taking into account the possible objections to a system of safeguards which by its terms applies solely to non-nuclear-weapon Powers..

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

In the view of the United States, the proper solution must be found between those two alternatives. It is for that reason that the United States is recommending a solution which involves the system of safeguards which I described earlier in my remarks. This is a solution which will provide adequate assurance that the provisions of a non-proliferation treaty are being carried out. It is a solution that would be truly workable in that its inspection provisions would not be so extensive as to be beyond the practical capabilities of the international safeguard system; nor would it be directed in large part to areas not related to non-proliferation. It would at the same time avoid discrimination against the non-nuclear-weapon Powers in the area where they might properly feel it most keenly: that is, the area of international commerce.

That solution, as I have indicated earlier in my remarks, would involve a system under which the non-nuclear-weapon States undertook to accept IAEA or equivalent international safeguards on all their peaceful activities. Such international safeguards would effectively provide clear evidence to the non-nuclear-weapon States that other non-nuclear-weapon States were not developing nuclear weapons under the guise of peaceful application of nuclear energy. Such reassurance would of course be essential to the continuing stability of the non-proliferation treaty and the permanent realization of its objectives.

The solution, as I have previously pointed out, also involves a system under which parties to the treaty would undertake not to provide source or fissionable material, or specialized equipment or non-nuclear material for processing or use of source or fissionable material or for the production of fissionable material, to any other State for peaceful purposes unless such material and equipment were subject to IAEA or equivalent international safeguards. I should like to emphasize again that this obligation should apply to the peaceful programmes of all States, whether they be nuclear-weapon States or non-nuclear-weapon States. Thus, in the transfer of such materials and equipment between States for peaceful purposes, all States would be treated alike.

The undertakings in the safeguard system I have described represent a balance of conflicting values. They represent a compromise, a balance of interests. Adjustment and balance of interest are essential to all negotiation. We are seeking realizable solutions which will be recognized as equitable by all participants and which will at the same time help us stop nuclear proliferation. However, in arriving at that balance we must always keep in mind the importance of our objective.

(Mr. Fisher, United States)

The United States is not suggesting that an agreement on an effective system of safeguards in and of itself is the entire answer to the problem of non-proliferation. Even if there were to be immediate agreement on the system of safeguards which I have described, we still have the task before us, which was outlined at President Johnson's press conference of 5 July (ENDC/PV.276, p.12), of doing everything within our power to find language that would bring the nuclear Powers together in a treaty that would prevent proliferation.

But the importance of the objective that I have described in my remarks today --- the achievement of an effective system of safeguards as part of the effort to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons --- must be recognized. I believe that it is recognized in this Committee. It is recognized by the ninety-six member nations of the IAEA. The experience of some forty nations has shown that safeguards are practical, unintrusive and effective.

The problem is not the safeguard system itself but its extension to more facilities and to more types of facilities. The problem grows with the growth of nuclear power. The latest estimates indicate that by 1980 more than 100 kilogrammes of plutonium will be produced every day. As Mr. Seaborg, Chairman of the United States Atomic Energy Commission, recently pointed out, it could be used under safeguards as fuel to provide a substantial part of the world's power, or it could be used to make tens of nuclear weapons every day. Which shall it be: peaceful power or nuclear bombs? The choice is up to us.

U MAUNG MAUNG (Burma): Before embarking on the substance of my statement I should like to avail myself of the opportunity to express my appreciation for the kind words of welcome extended to me by many representatives in this Committee.

My delegation shares the view of other delegations that there are many issues that we must resolve, even though the time remaining at our disposal before the opening of the General Assembly in September is very short. If we fail to show some measure of achievement from our work this year we shall have failed the international community, which has put its faith in us and entrusted us with the task of searching for international peace and security.

(U Maung Maung, Burma)

That faith has found expression in the three resolutions of the General Assembly which are considered as mandates given to us by the international community (ENDC/161). Although the Committee has been meeting regularly since the beginning of this year, except for a brief recess, we are still far from the goals set for us by the international community. However, despite the lack of positive achievements it cannot be said that our discussions here have been of no avail; for they have led to a greater comprehension of the nature of the issues that we must resolve and a clarification of positions which pinpoints the areas of difference to be bridged and the goals we must attain in the interests of international security.

The three resolutions to which I have just referred have in fact a correlation which implies the need for coherent solutions. Resolution 2032 (XX) on the need for suspension of nuclear and thermonuclear tests has a bearing on resolution 2028 (XX) on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in that a test ban is in itself a non-proliferation measure which calls for the need to attain the former if we are to achieve the latter. Again, if those two measures are not achieved, it does not appear likely that we shall be able to move towards our ideal of general and complete disarmament, on which the General Assembly in its resolution 2031 (XX) has requested the Committee to continue its efforts, for it goes without saying that if armaments are to be reduced it is necessary first to arrest their growth.

That link has been wisely indicated in the United Nations resolution on the suspension of nuclear tests, where a clear reference is made to "the crucial importance of a comprehensive test ban to the issue of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons" (A/RES/2032(XX)); and the resolution on the latter has in turn stated that the attainment of general and complete disarmament would be more difficult of achievement if there were failure to contain the spread of nuclear weapons (A/RES/2028(XX)).

If I have today, like other representatives of non-aligned States who have previously spoken, chosen to discuss the test-ban issue, it is because I also feel that this item, on which the area of our discussion has been thoroughly ploughed, is in need of urgent solution. The technical aspects relating to its solution have been thoroughly explored. The seed of past negotiations has grown, in the form of the partial test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1), and what is needed now is to make that sapling grow into a mature plant from which the fruits of a comprehensive treaty can be gathered for the whole world to enjoy. Needless to say, our labours through the years on this subject have placed many technical criteria at our disposal; and all that is needed of the super-Powers is the political courage of their convictions.

(U Maung Maung, Burma)

The priority given to the test-ban issue in our statement today does not in any way diminish the importance and urgency of the non-proliferation issue. The discussions during this session have brought into focus certain important issues outstanding between the major nuclear Powers which, if pursued further with determination, could provide a basis for compromise leading to the purposeful exploration of the multilateral aspects of the problem. We share the views of other delegations, particularly the delegation of India, that we should not lose sight of the issue of general and complete disarmament, which is the raison d'être of this Committee. We hope to set out our thoughts on those important issues at a later stage, if it appears necessary.

A further step towards our primary objective of a comprehensive test-ban treaty would signify, among other things, that the major nuclear Powers had decided to "call it quits" in their dangerous game of running a nuclear arms race -- which would be an evidence of their faith in security through disarmament and not through a search for deadlier weapons of mass destruction and would be, above all, a harbinger of greater things to come in our search for disarmament.

I should like to emphasize once again the non-proliferation aspects of a comprehensive test ban in our efforts to find ways and means of preventing the wider spread of nuclear weapons. The non-aligned delegations have pointed out time and again the causal link between those two measures, and unless the former complements the latter there can be no complete solution.

It has often been said that procrastination is the thief of time, and that saying could aptly be applied to the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban issue. Procrastination could lead to a possible technical break-through as a result of the continuance of underground tests, which could spell a new and dangerous turn of events in the nuclear arms race, fraught with dangerous potentialities. The representatives of Sweden, the United Arab Republic, Canada and many other countries have at one time or another given accounts of a possible nuclear break-through which could lead to the upsetting of the present tenuous balance of deterrence which, although highly undesirable, has up to now provided some dubious sense of security. The arms race which began about twenty years ago has now reached a technical plateau, and the continuing competition is in terms of quantitative increase and greater sophistication of existing types of weapons.

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It has been said that there is a third level, or field, of weaponry beyond the existing thermo-nuclear or hydrogen bomb to which a break-through would be possible by means of further nuclear testing. Such a break-through in nuclear weaponry would mean the possible creation of a new and totally different kind of arms race which, with its vicious circle of competition in defensive and counter-defensive strategic weapons, could lead to a point of no return. The possible acquisition of new technical-weapon knowledge through continued underground testing could jeopardize the prospects for a non-proliferation treaty. The development of less expensive fusion weapons has been pursued for several years, and such development could well mean opening the door of the "nuclear club" to additional countries which, owing to their lack of industrial capacity, cannot at present aspire to membership. Once the super-Powers achieved such a technical break-through, it would not be possible to keep the discovery a secret; and that would without doubt lead to a greater number of contenders in the nuclear race.

These fears of ours are not unfounded. The representatives of both the Soviet Union and the United States have, in 1962, described to us the possible consequences of underground nuclear testing. In this connexion I should like to quote Mr. Dean, the then representative of the United States, who gave specific illustrations of the possible consequences of underground nuclear testing. He said that underground explosions could lead to --

- "1. development and testing of tactical weapons;
- "2. development and improvement of the small initiating portion of larger weapons;
- "3. tests of weapons effects, namely, of the damages caused by shock, blast, X-rays and neutrons;
- "4. development of basically new weapons as, for example, the pure fusion weapon about which so much has been written and said."

(ENDC/PV.71, p.20).

The major nuclear Powers have time and again been reminded that what is needed is consideration of the balance of risks. The risks to national security supposedly inherent in taking such a step should be weighed against the risks involved to humanity at large in continuing the nuclear arms race. Therefore it goes without saying that the search for security through the continuance of the race in nuclear armaments -- which in themselves are the very source of insecurity -- must be outweighed by the saner concept of security through disarmament.

(U Maung Maung, Burma)

These thoughts are tendered in the earnest hope that they will add some modest contribution in indicating what the non-aligned delegations feel about continued nuclear testing. We still place our hopes in the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty; for, after all, many of us here have stated in one form or another that, unless the spread of nuclear weapons is contained and unless the super-Powers show some evidence of freezing the quantitative and qualitative growth of their nuclear arsenals, there is little or no prospect of achieving substantial steps towards disarmament. It is one of the physical laws of nature that the principle of growth is contrary to the principle of reduction. A corollary that can be deduced is that a comprehensive test ban is the beginning of the thread which must start unwinding the knotty problem of nuclear disarmament.

At our meeting on 26 July the representative of Brazil succinctly stated that there now existed a very slight disagreement, not on the substance of the matter but rather on the implementation of such a treaty (ENDC/PV.276, p.16). I hasten to say that that is an accurate assessment of the situation; for we have indeed travelled a long way in our negotiations on the stopping of nuclear tests. Both sides agree that a comprehensive test ban would deeply affect their security interests and that there should be adequate verification of the observance of such a treaty. Both sides also agree that verification should not be such as to demand inspection for its own sake, and that the criteria for verification should be no more than what is required to give some reasonable assurance that the test ban is being observed.

But why is it that a comprehensive test ban has so persistently eluded us and the positions, although they have come closer together, are still fossilized? The answer could be attributed to suspicion and mistrust on both sides; and what is needed is to overcome the psychological barriers that stand in the way of a compromise. As long ago as 1962 we said:

"Like every other delegation present here, the Burmese delegation wishes to see an end to all nuclear testing in all environments... Our objective is -- and until we reach it will always remain -- a comprehensive treaty prohibiting nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, underwater and underground in conditions which will give every party to the treaty reasonable assurance that the ban is being observed by all other parties, for without such assurance the treaty would always be in jeopardy. We should like to see

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such a treaty signed today, but since that is not possible we would be prepared -- such is our desire to make even a beginning in bringing this terrible game to an end -- to support a treaty banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and underwater, always provided however that it is generally accepted as a strictly interim measure and as a step leading to a comprehensive treaty, not just a step towards it." (ENDC/PV.78, p.6)

We also said:

"Burma's position on nuclear testing in general is well known. We are, we have always been, and we shall always be opposed to nuclear-weapon tests, whoever may conduct them, whatever the environment and whatever the purpose. We have, we believe, already made it clear that in this matter we draw no distinction between underground tests and tests in other environments." (ENDC/PV.113, p.10)

That is the position which impels us once again to join the chorus of other non-aligned delegations in pointing out to the nuclear Powers that it is now very urgent and necessary to take a step from the partial test ban towards the ultimate goal of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. On 5 August next three years will have elapsed since the test-ban Treaty (ENDC/100/Rev.1) was signed in Moscow. The General Assembly, in its resolution 1910 (XVIII) of 27 November 1963 (ENDC/116), after expressing its approval of the Treaty, requested this Committee to continue with a sense of urgency its negotiations to achieve the objectives set forth in the preamble of the treaty, namely "to achieve the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time". Despite that appeal and the subsequent resolutions that have been handed to us from year to year, we cannot pride ourselves on having made any progress in the negotiations, not to mention achieving an agreement towards that end.

It cannot be said that the lack of progress is due to lack of ingenuity and ideas, for we have plenty of proposals; and in that respect the non-aligned delegations have from time to time suggested various ways and means by which we could move towards our prime objective of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The proposals contained in the statements of the non-aligned delegations give various possibilities for a compromise.

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An interesting suggestion submitted by the delegation of the United Arab Republic (ENDC/PV.224, pp.9, 10) calls for the extension of the Moscow Treaty to cover events above a seismic magnitude of 4.75, this to be coupled with a voluntary moratorium on all tests, pending agreement on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. A later suggestion by the delegation of the United Arab Republic (ENDC/PV.259, pp.29, 30), supplementary to that proposal, calls for the application of the Swedish proposal for "verification by challenge" (ENDC/PV.247, pp.16 et seq.; PV.256, pp.4 et seq.; ENDC/154) to the voluntary test suspension, which should remove the taint of an unconditional moratorium which is considered unacceptable by one side. The suggestion made by Mrs. Myrdal, the representative of Sweden, for concluding a treaty on underground tests on the basis of the concept of "verification by challenge" should be an acceptable compromise on verification, as it attempts to find a middle ground between the positions of the United States and the Soviet Union.

The idea embodied in the formula submitted by the representative of Sweden is that any party or parties to the treaty, in the case of a suspicious event, could challenge the responsible party or parties in a step-by-step process of challenge and response which, albeit non-obligatory, does not exclude an invitation to carry out inspection. Together with the withdrawal clause stipulating the right of withdrawal by any party to the treaty if its demands for explanations are not adequately met, that provides a juridical assurance that should meet the recognized need for adequate verification.

We feel also that the Swedish idea of a "detection club" (ENDC/154), which calls for a free international exchange of seismological data and of observations on seismological recordings, could be utilized so that the "club" could act as an informal international court of opinion, which is an essential prerequisite to the concept of inspection by challenge, with particular reference to assessing unidentified seismic events.

We believe that our objective is to find an acceptable formula so that we can achieve a formal agreement to ban all underground tests. However, if for the time being this is not possible, then we should explore the idea of an agreement prohibiting underground tests above a certain threshold, coupled with the suspension of all

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underground tests, to which the "verification by challenge" concept could be applied. The operation of such an interim arrangement should build up the mutual confidence required; and this, together with further improvements in detection and identification methods, should assure all parties of the practical feasibility of completely banning nuclear-weapon tests in all media under adequate verification arrangements.

The CHAIRMAN (translation from Russian): If there are no other speakers, I shall read out the communiqué; but before doing so I should like to welcome, on behalf of the Committee, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Epstein, who has come back to Geneva to participate in the work of our Committee. I wish him every success in his endeavours, and at the same time I should like to express the conviction that his participation will prove, as in the past, a useful contribution to the work of our Committee.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 277th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Zdenek Cernik, representative of Czechoslovakia.

"Statements were made by the representatives of the United States and Burma.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 2 August 1966, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.